



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Lexington Sheriff Arrests Columbia Man in Internet Predator Sting

Columbia - Attorney General Henry McMaster announced today that Dennis Joseph Powell, Junior, 30, of 6470 Eastshore Road in Columbia, was arrested on February 22, 2008, in an undercover Internet sting conducted by the Lexington County Sheriff's Department.

The Lexington County Sheriff's Department is a member of the Attorney General's Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

Powell was arrested on one (1) count of Criminal Solicitation of a Minor (§16-15-342), a felony offense punishable to ten (10) years imprisonment; one (1) count of Attempted Dissemination of Obscene Material to a Minor (§16-15-345), a felony offense punishable to ten (10) years imprisonment; and one (1) count of Attempted Criminal Sexual conduct with a Minor (§16-3-655), a felony offense punishable to twenty (20) years imprisonment.

Arrest warrants allege that beginning on October 24, 2007, Powell solicited sex on the Internet from an individual he believed to be a twelve (12) year old girl. In reality, he was communicating with undercover Lexington County Sheriff's Deputies. Powell is also accused of using a digital camera to photograph his genitalia and using the Internet to disseminate the image to the "girl." Powell further arranged to meet the "girl" for sex at a predetermined location in Lexington County. He was arrested upon his arrival.

A search warrant executed at Powell's residence resulted in the seizure of a computer, a digital camera, an image scanner, a bottle of wine, and various computer related items.

The Richland County Sheriff's Department (also a member of the ICAC Task Force) assisted with the case.

Powell was assigned a \$15,000 bond. A booking photo is available through the Lexington County Detention Center.

This is the one hundred eleventh (111th) arrest for the Task Force.

The case will be prosecuted by the Attorney General's Office.

McMaster stressed that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until they are proven guilty in a court of law.

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